



# MEDIA RELEASE

STATE OF TENNESSEE  
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## **FOOD STAMP PROGRAM RECEIVES NATIONAL RECOGNITION**

*HUMAN SERVICES EARNS \$3 MILLION BONUS FOR IMPROVING PROGRAM ACCESS*

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — The Department of Human Services is being recognized and rewarded for helping needy Tennesseans put food on the table. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) recently announced that a handful of states would receive bonuses for providing excellent customer service in the Food Stamp Program. Tennessee earned the highest bonus award.

"The Department and our partners across the state are working hard every day to ensure that eligible individuals receive the nutritional assistance they deserve," said Human Services Commissioner Gina Lodge. "We are pleased that the USDA is recognizing these efforts."

Tennessee, Missouri, Oregon and the District of Columbia were all recognized for increasing their participant access rate (PAR). Tennessee's PAR for calendar year 2003 was 91 percent. The PAR is the ratio of participants to the number of people in poverty. Outreach and education efforts on the part of the Department of Human Services and its partners have made many potentially eligible people aware of the program.

Food Stamp Program benefits are 100 percent federally funded through the USDA and administered by the Department of Human Services. The program provides nutritional assistance benefits to low income children and families.

More than \$72 million in Food Stamp benefits were issued in Tennessee last month. There are currently 365,000 households, or 834,000 individuals, enrolled in the program. Nationally, more than \$2 billion in benefits are issued to 10.4 million families each month.

For the last state fiscal year, the average Food Stamp household size in Tennessee was 2.3 persons, and the average household monthly benefit was \$193.

For more information on the Food Stamp program and to view a county by county breakdown of Food Stamp participation and issuance, visit the Department of Human Services website at:

<http://www.state.tn.us/humanserv/fs-participation.htm>

To review a copy of the USDA news release on the awards, please visit:

[http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/!ut/p/\\_s.7\\_0\\_A/7\\_0\\_1OB?contentidonly=true&contentid=2004/09/0416.xml](http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/!ut/p/_s.7_0_A/7_0_1OB?contentidonly=true&contentid=2004/09/0416.xml)

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